

Momentum

Playbook 2

Revisit Your WHY?

By Maria Rass

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Playbook 2:

Revisit Your WHY?

Tough Love Time: Quality And Skill Are Not Enough.

When people need what you offer, they have many choices for how to fill their need. And often, when they make a decision, they may choose based on something more than just “what they get.”

People decide to buy from you not just because of what you sell, but because of *how you make them feel*.

While this might not be the case for all commodities like salt or garbage bags, I’ll bet you still buy certain products because here’s “just something about that brand” that puts them a cut above their competition.

[Dawn](#) promotes how their soap is used to clean and care for wildlife affected by oil spills and pollution. If given the choice, who wouldn’t want to support a company who cleans those innocent, adorable little critters?

For every pair of shoes it sells, [Tom’s](#) donates one pair to a child in need. They call this effort One for One™. When you buy from them, you help others.

[Jeni’s Spendid Ice Creams](#) is devoted to making the very best ice cream in the world, using natural ingredients, supporting sustainable suppliers and offering unique flavors not available anywhere else. You can feel good about indulging in this tasty treat.

San Francisco hipsters and tourist coffee connoisseurs alike flock to [Blue Bottle Coffee](#), for an individually-filtered cup of the freshest coffee available. Their coffees are only sold within 48 hours of roasting. The founder, James Freeman, is on a quest to deliver deliciously fresh coffee to anyone who seeks it. They are not just about selling coffee, but about a hand-crafted coffee experience.

And let’s not forget personal brands we know and love....

[Marie Forleo](#) is committed to helping women succeed in business and in life. She not only provides quality content, she often rallies her base to support causes such as clean water or educational opportunities for girls. When you join her tribe, you become part of something bigger.

[Hiro Boga](#) teaches people how to create businesses with soul; businesses that connect with who you are as a sacred gift. She believes this passionately and even shares her inspirations and nourishment so

you know immediately who she is and what she is all about. If you want to feel aligned and fulfilled in your business, she's your gal.

[Kris Carr](#) shares her experience as a crazy sexy cancer survivor to coach you to a healthy and thriving life of your own. She is more than just products, recipes and health tips. Her fans are part of a "healthy living" movement and they love her sassy swagger.

These companies and people do not necessarily provide something no one else can provide.

But one thing they clearly communicate? Their WHY.

What's Your WHY?

You may have already heard of Simon Sinek and his Golden Circle. If not, he did a pretty awesome [TED talk](#) about it—and I was lucky enough to hear him speak at a conference years ago before he got really big. Simon's message is that powerful leaders (and brands) are born when you stop primarily focusing so much on WHAT you do but WHY you do it.

Your Mission Statement. Your Raison D'Etire. Your WHY. Whatever you call it, the point is, it's the key to a successful brand and powerful marketing. It's why we're going to start here, before diving into anything else.

There is a deeper reason you started your business. What lies underneath everything you do? Yes, yes, we all are in business to make money. But as my brand mentor Marty Neumeier once shared with when I wrote, [Branding Basics for Small Business](#), if you solely focus on "money" as the driver, you won't get very far. That won't sustain you or keep the fire burning long-term.

People want to support something. They want to believe. And, frankly, so do you.

There are lots of ways to make money. But why are you choosing *this* particular path? What is the real reason behind why—and how—you do it?

If you are not clear about this, the rest is a flimsy house of cards. In order to build a business that can evolve and sustain you, let's get crystal clear on your WHY.

In Case You're Wondering: Why I Do What I Do

Let me pull back the curtain and reveal something: I have struggled over the years to get my arms around my own WHY. And I found the answer to be quite simple: ***I am a storyteller who believes in the power of stories.*** Stories can shape, motivate, teach, ignite, delight, provoke and move people beyond anything we thought possible. A well-told, witty, clever story is incredibly sexy.

I also believe that businesses and brands can stand for something more than profits because they have the power to enhance the world and improve lives, if they so choose. No matter how big or

small, businesses have the power to use marketing and communication to share amazing stories that highlight good instead of evil. And I want to use my platform to share even *more* stories: to shine a light on and give back to worthy causes, rally people together and inspire them to make the world better.

My WHY is to share stories that engage, inform and delight. PS, that's my mission statement, both personally and professionally.

WHAT I do is a vehicle to that WHY. And all the different ways that I choose to do this help fulfill that WHY: consulting, writing, speaking, acting. But always, the WHY behind it never changes. It's my cornerstone. *"I am a storyteller because stories inspire us and the world needs more love."*

With my WHY in hand, I can confidently create new offerings, pursue new projects and speak about new topics – all related to this core belief. My hope is that today's assignment helps you do the same.

Your WHY Is Not Just For You

Your WHY can do even more than just steer your own internal efforts. It can be the bright light that attracts your ideal audience to you like a moth to flame, and makes them rally behind you over someone else.

When you communicate your WHY, you tell the world: *This is who I am; this is how I work; If you dig it, great! Let's chat. If not, thanks for stopping by.*

Your WHY filters out people who are not a good match for you because they can self-select if they want to be part of your tribe. It's your nightclub bouncer: You only want to get into this party if you're down with what I'm all about.

Please understand: This means you cannot–and should not–please everyone. Building an irresistible brand is not about being pleasing the masses. You want to put a stake in the ground and stand for something. Once you do, the exact people you want to attract will rally around you. But only if you're clear. As I always love to say...

If you try to be all things to all people, you will be nothing to no one.

Your Assignment: Articulate Your WHY and Craft Your Manifesto

What is a manifesto? It's your personal philosophy that encapsulates your WHY but also your vibe. Who are you? What are you all about? What is your tone? This is not just a vanity play. It's gives prospects a strong sense for what it's like to work with you.

You can post a Manifesto on the About page of your website and even create a hybrid bio/manifesto all

rolled into one, [as I have](#), lovingly called a *Biofesto*) or as a completely separate page called “Manifesto”, “Philosophy”, or “What I/We Believe.” You can also share links to it in your social media profiles or your email newsletter if you like. It might also be helpful to include this with your bio at the end of proposals. However you share it is up to you!

Some examples:

The queen of manifesto-writing, [Alexandra Franzen](#)

[Blue Bottle Coffee’s story](#) reveals their core beliefs about coffee.

Here’s [one](#) we crafted with my amazing client, Renee Metty of With PAUSE.

Here’s [another](#) from a client, Karen Ross and her fabulous coaching firm Start With You

And an [awe-inspiring one](#) for my client, Souldust.

NOTE: *If you are just starting out, this may be a new exercise for you. But...if your business is in full-swing, you might be thinking, “Yawn, Maria, I’ve already done this!” Trust me: there is huge value in revisiting this—and often. How else can you ensure you’re on track or have not strayed/evolved? If you’re here with me, you’re committed to reinvigorating your business—and yourself—and revisiting your WHY is the one and only place to start.*

Here are some prompts to help you craft your gorgeous manifesto. You don’t have to answer all of these but they may get your creative thoughts flowing! Feel free to be soulful, deep, light, profound, funny, snarky....answer these in whatever inner voice feels authentic to you:

I value _____

Nothing makes me feel more alive inside than whe _____

I may call myself a _____ but what I really do is _____

The most important people or things in my life are _____

My greatest heroes are _____ because _____

I could not live without _____

My approach to work is _____

_____ was a profound turning point in my life and it taught me that the world needs more _____

My goal is for every client/customer to _____, _____ and _____

I adore _____

I despise _____

I crave _____

Someday, I'd like to _____

If I could teach you one thing it would be _____

The best part of my work is _____

I chose this calling (or, This calling chose me) because _____

When I'm not working, my biggest joys are _____

If only _____, my work would be complete and I would feel whole.

My very best friends would say that I _____

_____ is something that lights me up inside.

My magic superpowers are _____

I work best with people who are _____, _____ and _____

I truly believe I was put on this earth to _____

My favorite motto/mantra/quote is _____ and I live that out every day by _____

My favorite quote is _____

My deepest wish is that when I die _____

Your Big WHY:

A the end of the day, my mission in life is to _____

Now, craft your Manifesto in the space below. This does not have to be perfect! Just write what comes to you, as it comes. Do not edit yourself!

But wait, you're not quite done....

Now: post either your Big WHY statement and/or draft Manifesto in our [nurturing Facebook group](#) for a chance to win a fabulous prize from yours truly.

Again, do NOT stress if these are not perfectly copywritten or grammatically correct. We're talking raw instincts, here. You can always revisit this later or hire a copywriter for final sparkle and shine.

We are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward you all year long, so don't lose your MOMENTUM: Post it now and keep that train moving!

One Last Thing

Your manifesto is one of the most powerful tools you have to differentiate yourself from the competition. There might be thousands of people who do what you do, sell what you sell or have written the book you want to wrote. But no one does it with your voice, style, flair, philosophy or approach. I'm excited for you to witness the marketing power and sheer magnetism of a well-crafted manifesto.

Dig deep and please don't be afraid to take a stand about who you are and how you work. If you try to be all things to all people, you will be nothing to no one. This brand asset will attract the right people to your work...and when it repels the wrong people, that is a gift to you as well. You don't want to waste your time and energy fielding requests or serving the wrong audience.

Tell the world who you are and for what you stand. That's how you create a brand that people adore. One to which they will remain loyal. One for which they will happily spread the word to other like-minded people.

You do you,

Maria

Goodies and Inspirations

[SING by My Chemical Romance](#) does for me what William Wallace's speech did for his soldiers in Braveheart. Ignore the disturbing video and just listen with your eyes closed. Once you're sufficiently pumped, start writing your manifesto!

If you crave even more soul-stirring anthems, [here's a special playlist I created](#) to inspire entrepreneurial rockstars like you. Enjoy!

Simon Sinek's famous Golden Circle [TED talk](#) mentioned earlier. It's good. Watch it.

When you're ready to take your WHY and fashion a true mission and/or vision statement, [check out this](#).